

# The Vinton Chronicles

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Principal James E. Palmer



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## A Message from the Principal

As you receive this edition of *The Vinton Chronicles*, it's hard to believe that the new year is right around the corner. For me, the holiday season is a time for reflection. Without question I am fortunate to be surrounded by wonderful children, supportive parents, and a dedicated staff. On behalf of the entire Vinton School family, have a joyous holiday, a restful vacation, and best wishes for a prosperous 2011!

- *As certain as seasons come and go*, Vinton School chapters open and close. My deepest appreciation to Mrs. Marie Lynch, as she begins her well-deserved retirement after admirably serving the entire Vinton School community for the past seven years. I'm positive she will be nominated for the School Secretary Hall of Fame.
- *And a gigantic Vinton School welcome* to Mrs. Amy Coates, our newly hired school secretary. We are all delighted to have her join the Vinton team. Mrs. Coates is featured in an article on this page of the newsletter.
- *School Building Project* decision

continues ... the Town Council recently passed a motion to direct the School Building Committee to reconvene. The charge is to provide recommendations for the cost of the two school option to be substantially closer to the cost of building one school. The two sites under consideration are located at Goodwin and Southeast schools.

- *With the arrival of cold weather*, please remember to send your child dressed appropriately for outdoor recess. In general, if the temperature is above twenty degrees with relatively low wind, the children go outside to play. If there's too much ice or wind, we stay indoors. But, if possible, we vote for fresh air and exercise rather than staying indoors all day. Thanks in advance for your help.
- *If there's anything else*, please feel free to call me at (860) 423-3086, extension 208 or email at [palmerje@mansfieldct.org](mailto:palmerje@mansfieldct.org) if you have a question, comment or need information. Be well.

## Upcoming Events

- ◆ Grade 4 Ice Skating at UCONN Jan 20<sup>th</sup> - Parents are invited to attend to watch or skate!
- ◆ Winter Concert Feb 9<sup>th</sup> (snow date Feb 10<sup>th</sup>), Afternoon (assembly) 2:15pm, Evening 7:00pm

## Introducing Our New Staff Members!



Mrs. Coates,  
Our new secretary

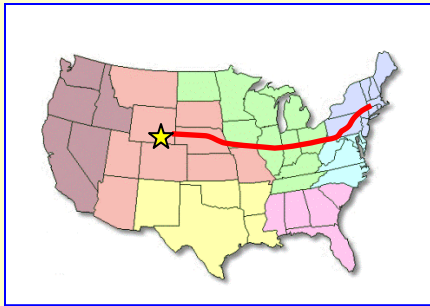
With some of our staff retiring during this past school year, we have a number of new faces at Vinton. One face you'll notice as soon as you enter the building is our new secretary, Mrs. Amy Coates.

Mrs. Coates has a degree in education and currently coaches an interscholastic horseback riding team of middle school and high school students. In fact, Mrs. Coates has two horses of her own

named Storm and Cat. Her other family friends include two dogs, Bubba and Pepper, and her beloved tortoise named Dr. Doolittle.

She has been busy learning the office routine (not to mention all of the names of our students and families!) If you come to the office, please feel free to stop by and introduce yourself. (Continued Page 4)

## Mileage Club: Already Half Way to Our Goal!



*Students have run enough miles to reach Saratoga, Wyoming!*

Our Mileage Club began in October and continued until earlier this month; it is on hiatus during the cold weather months but will return in the spring.

Our school's goal is to run across the USA. First graders are leading the way and are in Beach Bottom, Ohio, having run a total of 442.25 miles.

Next are our third graders who have run 378.75 miles, placing them in Moween, Pennsylvania. Kindergarteners have made their way to Clarksburg, PA by running over 372 miles, with fourth graders following closely behind with 330.5 miles.

In spite of only having two classes at the grade two level, students have logged in 284.5 miles and are in Peru, PA. If we totaled the miles run by all of our students it would equal 1808.5 miles which would place us in Saratoga,

Wyoming! That's more than half way to our ultimate goal of San Francisco, California!!

Students also have a personal goal of reaching 26.2 miles by the end of the school year. Several students have logged in at least 15 miles to date!

These students are Gabriel Friedman and Brianna Williams, (kindergarten); Jacob Bernstein and Parker Woodmansee (gr 1); Noah Woodmansee and Vernon Tung (gr 2); Jack Jones, Jayden Biamonte-Marrotte, Alex Pietras, Ali Raynor, Graciela Bourquin, Jerome Shangold, Sully Gildersleeve and Zach Donald (gr 3); and Keegan Santasiere, James Mitchell, and Joey Morse (gr 4). Way to go!!

We can't wait to resume Mileage Club again in the spring!



*Kindergarteners visited Hurst Farm and enjoyed hayrides and pumpkin picking.*

## CMT Club for Third Graders

The CMT Club began in early November to assist students in their preparation for the CMT (Connecticut Mastery Test) in early March. The students continue to work on math and reading strategies and have become quite adept at estimating solutions to problems as well as finding pertinent information in passages to support their responses to literature. In addition, they all have the opportunity to practice these skills using Study Island in our computer lab

and may log onto Study Island at home as well.

CMT Club is regularly scheduled on Wednesdays (taking into account staff meeting dates). It resumes in January on the following Wednesdays: January 5<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and continues through February on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Please remember that the Club will not meet if there is an early closing/emergency dismissal.

## Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten News

Pre-Kindergarteners have been getting into the winter spirit during Circle Time by donning their reindeer antlers and ringing sleigh bells as they sing songs.

They have also been working hard on a very special surprise gift to bring home to their families before winter break. Families will just have to wait and see what it is! Mrs. Rameaka's class isn't giving away any clues!

Kindergarten classes have also been busy. Recently they visited the Mansfield Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and delighted the residents with their songs and happy wishes for a joyful and peaceful holiday season. This visit reinforces the lessons kindergarteners learn about community as part of their social studies curriculum.



*Pre-Kindergarteners wearing their antler gear*

## Grade Four and Native American Studies

Grade Four classes recently went to the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center as part of their Native American studies curriculum. Lauren Helbling found the village exhibit to be the most interesting and she especially enjoyed seeing how the Native Americans made bowls and tools. Drew LaPlaca appreciated being able to go inside the wigwams to see what it was like. And Julia Vampatella was impressed by the “Caribou Hunt” and how the “Native Americans used every single part of the caribou.”

Recently, Mr. Juan Sanchez (grandfather of a former Vinton students), visited the classroom and captivated our students with his Native American folklore. He used many artifacts to enhance his presentation. Amelia Geist said that Mr. Sanchez “made a legend come to life with the words, props, and loud noise.” Thank you Mr. Sanchez!



*Mr. Sanchez delights the fourth graders with Native American folklore*

## Reader's Theatre presented at Celebrate Vinton

December's Celebrate Vinton featured a special presentation by Mrs. Harbec's (Mrs. Reilly's) class. The entire class performed *The Gingerbread Boy*, an Old English folktale.

As a special project, one of Mrs. Harbec's students, Bailey LaPlaca, spent a great deal of time researching different plays to find the perfect

choice for her class to perform. She selected this particular play because her class has been studying this topic, including their recently completed gingerbread houses. Not only was Bailey in charge of casting her classmates in this play but she also directed it (with a little help from Ms. Barrow). It was a wonderful performance!!



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**We're on the Web!**  
[mansfieldct.org/schools/vinton](http://mansfieldct.org/schools/vinton)



*"Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression."*

*Dr. Haim Ginott*



*Mrs. Gilmore, Art teacher*



*Mrs. Herrick,  
Special Education/ Title 1 teacher*



*Mrs. Drew,  
Literacy Coach*

## Spanish with Señora Zugarazo

Recently I've been popping into the Kindergarten classes talking about Las Posadas. This holiday is celebrated in Mexico for nine nights before Christmas. We learned about the piñatas of Las Posadas. Ask your child what shape a Posada Piñata is in and to sing the songs I taught them. There is a little paper that is coming home to help you out!

In grade two we've been working on Las Posadas as well. Students are working on their own individual piñata that will come home before break. They have also learned a lot about this holiday. Ask them to share with you.

Third graders have been in Guatemala for the month and are finishing up our worry doll project. Students learned

about the clothing and designed a worry doll. Their projects will be coming home soon. Ask your child to describe it to you in Spanish.

We are learning about the Ekeko in grade four. It is a very interesting little statue with wishes attached to it. We are working on our own Ekekos to give away, as is the tradition. We had a day at the market where students had to buy trinkets from other students using their boliviano and had to work out the prices of these items. Students really had a great time in the market trying to get the prices lowered. It was pretty funny and done all in Spanish. I was very proud of them!!! Ask your child about the tradition and they should be able to tell you about it.

## New Vinton Staff (continued from Page 1)

Also joining our staff this year is Mrs. Gilmore, our new Art teacher. Mrs. Gilmore graduated from the University of Vermont with a degree in Art Education. In addition to teaching at Vinton, she also teaches at the Community School of the Arts at UCONN. Before coming to Vinton, she taught at the elementary and high school level in Tolland and Griswold.

Coming to teach at Vinton School is like a homecoming for Mrs. Gilmore who is a native of the town of Mansfield! She also has a cat named Sigmund and she is looking forward to the Fourth Grade play at the end of this year. Mrs. Gilmore will be helping with set design, costumes, decorations ... basically anything that needs some artistic flair!

Mrs. Herrick is our new Special Education/Title 1 Teacher for grades three and four. She holds a Masters in Reading degree from Eastern Connecticut State University. Previously she taught in schools in Phoenix, Arizona and Brattleboro, Vermont but for the nine years prior to coming to Vinton, she taught in the Vernon, Connecticut school system.

Mrs. Herrick has two children, Kason and Kamryn as well as a dog named Goda (which is "a dog" spelled backwards!)

And last, but certainly not least, Mrs. Drew is our new Literacy Coach. Mrs. Drew began her teaching career in Virginia but after coming to Connecticut, she got her Masters in Curriculum and Instruction (with a concentration in Reading) as well as a Masters in Reading and Literacy. She hopes to finish a few more classes so that she will obtain her sixth year/consultant certification.

Before coming to Vinton, she worked in the East Hartford school district for sixteen years. At home she has her two lovable bull dogs named Sam and Lizzie. She says that they are a lot of work but provide her and her husband with a lot of laughter and joy.

When she's not teaching or taking classes, she and her husband love to travel and they are always on the hunt to find good food. So, if you know of any great restaurants in the area, be sure to tell Mrs. Drew!

We are very happy to have welcomed our new staff members to the Vinton School family!

